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## SECTION 1.0

### PURPOSE, NEED, AND SCOPE FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND

The Army operates and maintains approximately 90,000 family housing units at its installations throughout the United States. More than 75 percent of the units do not meet current Army housing standards. Despite this, at most installations demand for adequate housing on-post exceeds supply. The lack of adequate on-post housing forces many soldiers and their families to live in housing in need of repair or renovation or to live off-post where the cost and quality of housing vary considerably. Often, the costs to soldiers and their families to live off-post are 15 to 20 percent greater than the costs to live on-post. The Army estimates that as much as \$6 billion would be needed to bring its housing up to current standards and to address the deficit of housing.

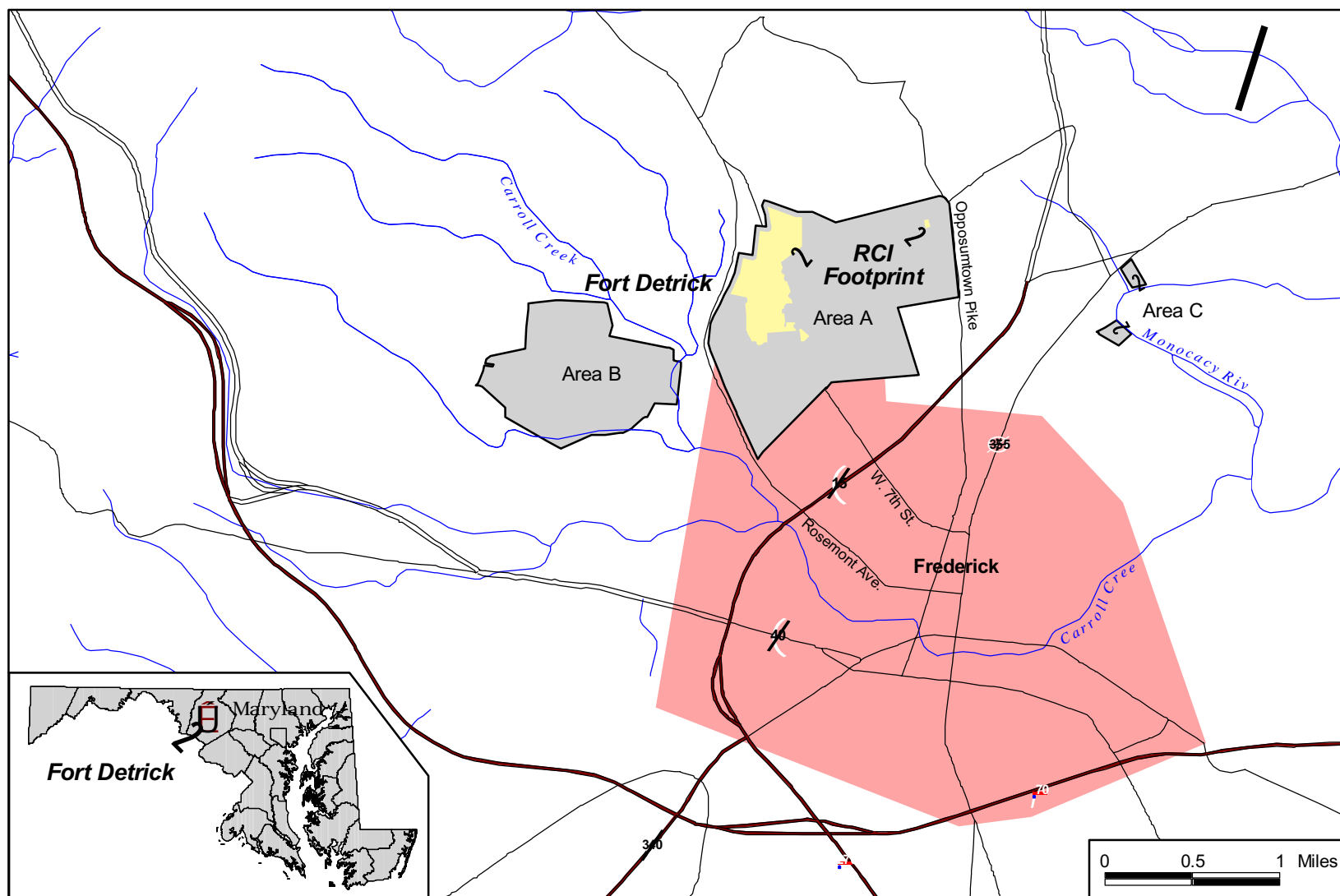
In recognition of these circumstances, Congress enacted Section 2801 of the 1996 Defense Authorization Act (Public Law 104-106, codified at Title 10 of the United States Code [U.S.C.] Sections 2871–85). Also known as the Military Housing Privatization Initiative (MHPI), this law creates alternative authorities for improvement and construction of military family housing. Through these authorities, Congress intended to enable the military services to obtain private sector funding to satisfy family housing requirements. By leveraging scarce public funding, the Army can obtain private sector funds for construction, maintenance, management, renovation, replacement, rehabilitation, and development of Army family housing and ancillary supporting facilities.<sup>1</sup> The Army's implementation of the MHPI authorities is known as the Army Residential Communities Initiative (RCI).

Fort Detrick occupies 1,143 acres in the northwest portion of Frederick, Maryland, as shown in Figure 1-1. The installation traces its roots to the small municipal airport known as Detrick Field in the 1930s. It was named in honor of Squadron Surgeon Major Frederick L. Detrick, who served in France during World War I. The first military presence, in August 1931, was an encampment by the Maryland National Guard. Detrick Field became a cadet pilot training center and functioned as such until December 1941. The 2nd Bombardment Squadron, U.S. Army Air Corps, was reconstituted at Detrick Field between March and September 1942 and deployed to England, forming the nucleus of the Eighth Air Force Headquarters. In 1943 the U.S. Army Biological Laboratories were established at Detrick Field, which was renamed Camp Detrick. The team of early scientists achieved pioneering efforts in decontamination, gaseous sterilization, and agent purification. Camp Detrick became Fort Detrick in 1956, continuing its mission of biomedical research and its reputation as the world's leading research campus for agents requiring specialty containment.

Fort Detrick serves four cabinet-level agencies: the Department of Defense (DoD), Department of Treasury, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Health and Human Services. Fort Detrick's DoD support includes elements of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The installation also supports several Unified and Major Army Commands: Unified U.S. Army Forces Command, U.S. Army Space Command, U.S. Army Information Systems Command, and U.S. Army Medical Command (MEDCOM). Major tenants located on

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<sup>1</sup> According to 10 U.S.C. 2871, the term *ancillary supporting facilities* means “facilities related to military housing units, including child care centers, day care centers, tot lots, community centers, housing offices, dining facilities, unit offices, and other similar facilities for the support of military housing.”



**LEGEND**

- Fort Detrick RCI Footprint
- Fort Detrick Installation Boundary

Source: Fort Detrick GIS, 2003.

# **Installation Location**

**Figure 1-1**

Fort Detrick are the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command (USAMRMC), 1110th Signal Battalion, and the U.S. Army Medical Materiel Agency. The installation has a population of more than 7,000 personnel, of whom nearly 1,800 are active duty military officer and enlisted personnel. The installation has 191 family housing units.

## **1.2 PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION**

The proposed action is privatization and expansion of family housing areas in the northwest portion of Fort Detrick, which entails construction of about 292 new housing units, demolition of about 127 existing units, and revitalization of about 62 existing units, and construction of associated access roads and ancillary facilities.

Consistent with MHPI authorities, Fort Detrick proposes to transfer responsibility for providing housing and ancillary supporting facilities to GMH Military Housing Fort Detrick, LLC (GMH). Fort Detrick would convey all military housing units and selected ancillary support facilities and grant a 50-year ground lease for the areas on which the housing and facilities are located to GMH. Fort Detrick would also lease additional areas for GMH's use to construct new housing and to operate ancillary supporting facilities.

The purpose of the proposed action is to improve Army family housing and ancillary supporting facilities at Fort Detrick. The proposed action is needed at the installation to provide affordable, quality housing and ancillary facilities to soldiers and their families by improving existing family housing units to allow them to meet current Army standards and to address the present deficit in the number of available family housing units at and near the installation.

Fort Detrick makes 28 of its family housing units available for officers and 163 housing units available for enlisted personnel. Four of the housing units were built before 1950. The oldest of these, constructed in the 18th century, is the oldest in the Army's housing inventory and is on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Of the installation's entire family housing inventory, 115 units were constructed before 1960. Many units lack amenities such as family rooms, laundry/utility space, adequate exterior storage, and auxiliary eating areas such as eat-in kitchens or breakfast nooks.

Fort Detrick expects GMH to achieve the following goals:

- ☞ Ensure that eligible soldiers and their families have access to quality, attractive, and affordable housing by upgrading inadequate existing family housing and by building new housing to address housing conditions at Fort Detrick.
- ☞ Improve the appearance and functions of the residential community while preserving historic properties, protecting cultural resources, and meeting environmental stewardship responsibilities.
- ☞ Provide ancillary supporting facilities that enhance Fort Detrick's residential community.
- ☞ Maintain positive relations with the communities that surround Fort Detrick.
- ☞ Provide for the effective management and operation of existing, renovated, and new housing units and ancillary supporting facilities on a long-term basis.

## **1.3 SCOPE OF ANALYSIS**

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been developed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and implementing regulations issued by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (40 CFR §§ 1500–1508), and the Army (32 CFR § 651, *Environmental Analysis of Army Actions*). Its purpose is to inform decisionmakers and the public of the likely environmental consequences of the proposed action and alternatives.

The EA identifies, documents, and evaluates the potential environmental effects of implementing the Army RCI at Fort Detrick. Section 2.0 fully describes the proposed action. Section 3.0 sets forth alternatives to the proposed action, including a no action alternative, and explains why certain alternatives are not evaluated in detail in the EA. Section 4.0 describes the existing environmental conditions at Fort Detrick that could be affected by the proposed action and identifies potential environmental effects that could occur upon implementation of each of the alternatives evaluated. Section 5.0 presents findings and conclusions regarding the potential environmental effects of the proposed action.

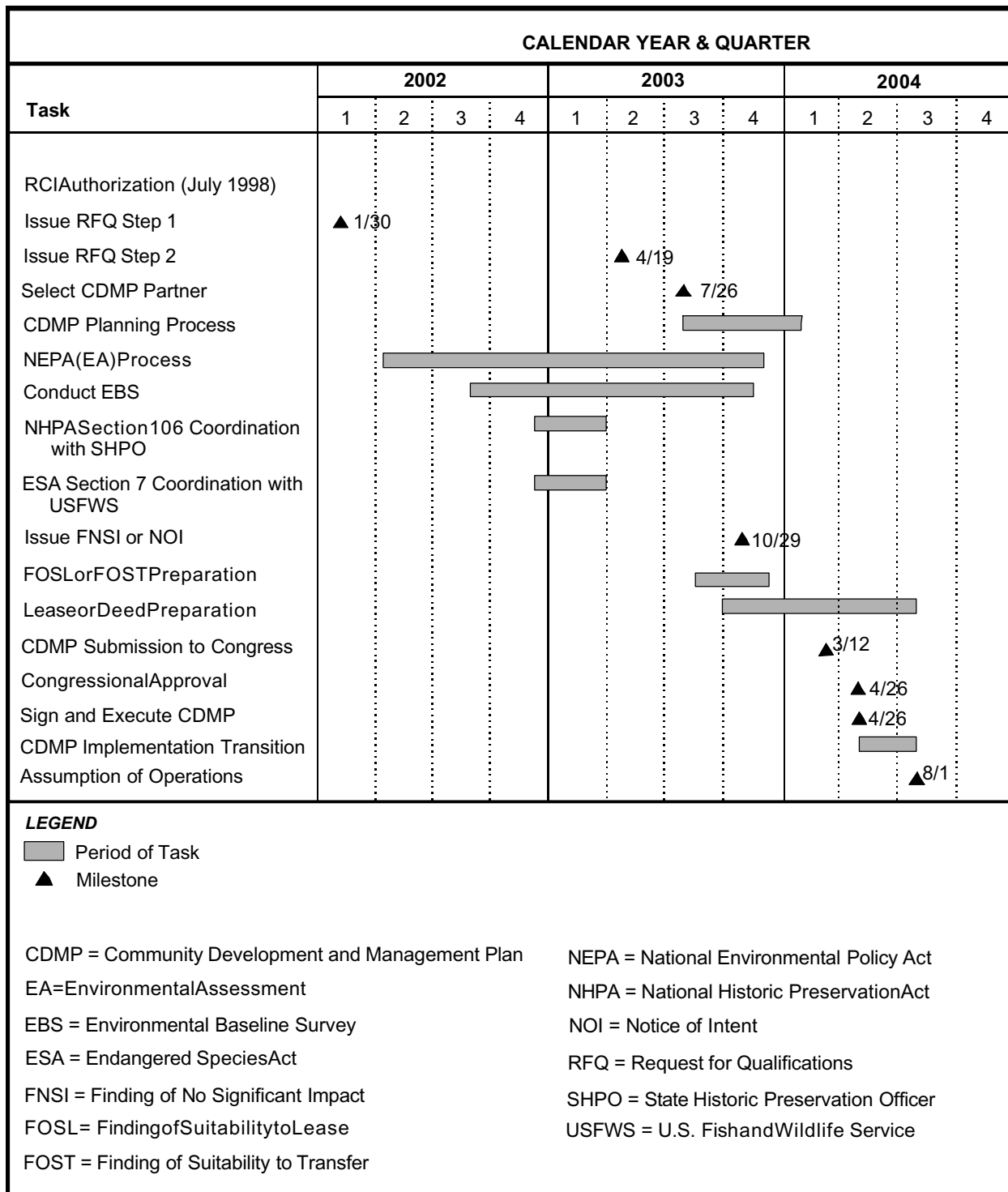
This EA evaluates the environmental and socioeconomic effects that would be expected to occur upon implementation of the proposed action as reflected in the Community Development and Management Plan (CDMP), the agreement ultimately negotiated by and between Fort Detrick and GMH. Because of cost, financial, environmental, or other reasons, certain choices, such as alternative housing sites, housing densities, housing formats (high-rise versus low-rise), types of ancillary supporting facilities, and the timing of specific Fort Detrick actions, were eliminated from further consideration during CDMP negotiations.

An interdisciplinary team of environmental scientists, biologists, ecologists, geologists, planners, economists, engineers, archaeologists, historians, and military technicians has reviewed the proposed action in light of existing conditions and identified relevant beneficial and adverse effects associated with it. The EA focuses on effects likely to occur within the project area, which generally consists of the present on-post family housing areas and new areas to be used for family housing neighborhoods. The document analyzes both direct effects (those caused by the proposed action and occurring at the same time and place) and indirect effects (those caused by the proposed action and occurring later in time or farther removed in distance but still reasonably foreseeable). The potential for cumulative effects is also addressed, and mitigation measures are identified where appropriate.

This EA focuses on evaluating environmental effects that are reasonably foreseeable, within approximately the first 10 years of the implementation of the CDMP (through 2014), as described in detail in Section 2.2.1. This is the period during which GMH would accomplish demolition, renovation, and new construction of family housing, as well as operation and maintenance of those housing units and ancillary supporting facilities. Environmental effects for years beyond 2013 are not reasonably foreseeable at this time and are not analyzed in this EA.

This EA identifies matters related to environmental considerations and supports decisionmaking on proposed RCI actions. Consistent with Army and other federal regulations and policies, the Army must undertake numerous other actions to achieve its objectives. Many of these other actions have resulted in the availability of information suitable for use in this EA. Figure 1-2 identifies the timeline for the EA process in relationship to other actions that accompany the RCI effort.

To reduce redundancy with previous relevant documents, the CEQ encourages tiering of EAs. This EA is based, in part, on earlier NEPA documentation. This approach entails referencing specific analyses, discussions, and conclusions of these documents without providing detailed discussion in the present EA. Consistent with CEQ guidance and Army policy, this EA is tiered to the *Final Environmental Assessment for the Installation Master Plan for Fort Detrick, Maryland* (USAG Fort Detrick, 2003b), *Environmental Assessment — Construction and Operation of New Commissary and Post Exchange (PX) Facilities, and Other Infrastructural Improvements on the South Central Portion of Area A — Fort Detrick, Maryland* (USAG Fort Detrick, 2002b), *Environmental Assessment for the Construction and Operation of Family Housing Quarters at Fort Detrick, Maryland* (USAG Fort Detrick, 2002c), and the *Environmental Planning Guide for Fort Detrick, Maryland* (USAG Fort Detrick, 1998b).



## RCI Project Schedule

Fort Detrick  
Frederick, Maryland

Figure 1-2

## **1.4 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

Fort Detrick invites public participation in the NEPA process. Consideration of the views and information of all interested persons promotes open communication and enables better decision-making. All agencies, organizations, and members of the public having a potential interest in the proposed action, including minority, low-income, disadvantaged, and Native American groups, are urged to participate in the decision-making process.

The Army's NEPA guidance provides for public participation in the NEPA process. If the EA concludes that the proposed action would not result in significant environmental effects, Fort Detrick may issue a draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI). Fort Detrick will then observe a 30-day period during which time agencies and the public can submit comments on the proposed action, the EA, or the draft FNSI. Copies of this draft EA and FNSI are provided in selected agencies and libraries (see Section 9.0, Distribution List). Upon consideration of any comments received from the public or agencies, Fort Detrick may approve the FNSI and implement the proposed action. If, however, during the development of the EA it is determined that significant effects would be likely, the Army would issue a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

Throughout this process, the public can obtain information on the status and progress of the proposed action and the EA by contacting Mr. Charles Dasey at the Fort Detrick Public Affairs Office at (301)619-2736.

## **1.5 FRAMEWORK FOR DECISIONMAKING**

A decision on whether to proceed with the proposed action rests on numerous factors, such as Fort Detrick's mission requirements, schedule, availability of funding, and environmental considerations. In addressing environmental considerations, Fort Detrick is guided by several relevant statutes, implementing regulations, and Executive Orders that establish standards and provide guidance on environmental and natural resources management and planning. These include, but are not limited to, the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Noise Control Act, Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Archaeological Resources Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Toxic Substances Control Act, Executive Order 11988 (*Floodplain Management*), Executive Order 11990 (*Protection of Wetlands*), Executive Order 12088 (*Federal Compliance with Pollution Control Standards*), Executive Order 12898 (*Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*), Executive Order 13045 (*Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks*), Executive Order 13148 (*Greening the Government Through Leadership in Environmental Management*) and Executive Order 13175 (*Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*). Where useful to better understanding, key provisions of these statutes and Executive Orders are described in more detail in the text of the EA.